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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 420  
By Patton

A RESOLUTION urging the United States Congress to pass the  
State Defense Force Improvement Act of 2003.

WHEREAS, since the events of September 11, 2001, public officials and citizens of this nation have recognized that the United States is under constant threat of attack by international terrorist organizations and elements who would unleash violence upon our institutions, infrastructure, and population to advance their causes; and

WHEREAS, in response to those threats, the United States has undertaken a number of initiatives, both abroad and domestically, to counter any such aggression; the domestic initiatives involve reorganization and integration of a number of federal agencies and programs under the umbrella of Homeland Security, and coordination with corresponding agencies and programs at the state and local governmental levels; and

WHEREAS, initiatives abroad have included the present Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom, in which large numbers of National Guard units from the several states have been deployed to augment regular U.S. Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force units in the field in the Middle East and elsewhere; and

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WHEREAS, given the present draw-down of National Guard units in the continental United States now and in the future, the role of state defense forces in those states that have them should be considered in an integrated plan for homeland security; and

WHEREAS, after one and one-half years of pre-legislative groundwork, the State Defense Force Improvement Act of 2003 is ready for introduction in the 107th Congress. Elements of the draft legislation include voluntary compliance by the United States Department of Defense and the states; standardization of the names of the various state defense forces as the "State Guard," emphasizing the role of the State Guard as a reserve to the National Guard; standardization of State Guard uniforms; State Guard training to be conducted in compliance and coordination with Department of Defense standards; authorization for the Department of Defense to provide the State Guard with access to surplus Department of Defense equipment; and protection of the Department of Defense from direct or indirect liability and costs; and

WHEREAS, the Honorable George Allen, Senator from Virginia, and the Honorable Charlie Norwood, Representative from Georgia, pending sponsors of the bill, are working to enable State Guard units to be an important element of an overall Homeland Security plan; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that this General Assembly hereby memorializes the Congress of the United States to act expeditiously to pass legislation upgrading and standardizing the state defense forces of the several states and integrating them into an effective overall Homeland Security plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this General Assembly memorializes each member of the United States Congress from Tennessee to utilize the full measure of his or her influence to effect the passage of the soon-to-be-introduced State Defense Force Improvement Act of 2003.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives is directed to transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States; the President and the Secretary of the United States Senate; the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives; the Honorable Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense; the Honorable Thomas Ridge, Secretary of Homeland Security, and to each member of the Tennessee delegation to the United States Congress.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that appropriate copies of this resolution be sent to the Honorable Phil Bredesen, Governor of the State of Tennessee, General Gus Hargett, Adjutant General; and General Jerry D. Humble, Director of the Office of Homeland Security.